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**To:** [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comment to Propose Changes to CrR 3.1, Standards for Indigent Defense  
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**From:** Poisel, Joshua <Joshua.Poisel@kingcounty.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 13, 2024 12:06 PM  
**To:** OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>  
**Cc:** Poisel, Joshua <Joshua.Poisel@kingcounty.gov>  
**Subject:** Comment to Propose Changes to CrR 3.1, Standards for Indigent Defense

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Dear Supreme Court Justices:

I am writing this comment to urge the Supreme Court to adopt proposed changes to CrR 3.1, Standards for Indigent Defense.

I have been a public defender in King County for nearly 20 years. I knew as of my 2L year that being a public defender is what I wanted to be. I heard the cliché before entering this profession: that public defenders are overworked and underpaid. While sadly true, those words merely scratch the surface of the current problem endemic to the public defender system: Exceptional, hardworking, and dedicated public defenders and staff leave because they are overworked, stressed out, and burnt out due to crushing caseloads and poor pay. Maintaining the current caseload standards will exacerbate an exodus of attorneys and staff who are committed to representing and helping the most vulnerable members of our community.

Adopting the proposed caseload standards would help stymie the departure of those dedicated public servants and maintain quality representation for indigent defendants. It will help retain experienced defenders who handle some of the most serious cases. Adopting the proposed caseload standards will help create a work-life balance for defenders: it will allow us to be present at our children's events; it will allow us to be present when we are home with our loved ones; it will allow us to thrive instead of simply surviving. Adopting the proposed caseload standards will create positive, beneficial downstream effects: space will be created for defenders to fulfill our constitutional obligations to our clients and provide them effective representation. It will allow time for the efficient review of discovery. It will foster more productive and meaningful conversations with our clients and their involvement in their cases.

You should adopt the new WSBA caseload standards for the sake of indigent defendants and for the

sake of the committed public servants who represent them in the criminal legal system.

Joshua Poisel (he/him)  
Attorney, SCRAP Division Seattle Felony Unit  
710 Second Avenue, Suite 10150  
Seattle, WA 98104  
**Phone:** (206) 477-9257  
**Cell:** (206) 472-4935